

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXV. THE OWNER OF BULLFINCH.

CAPTAIN WINSTANLEY had been master of the Abbey House three months, and there had been no open quarrel between him and Violet Tempest. Vixen had been cold as marble, but she had been civil. For her mother's sake she had held her peace. She remembered what Roderick Vawdrey had said about her duty, and had tried to do it, difficult as that duty was to the girl's undisciplined nature. She had even taken the loss of Titmouse very quietly—her father's first gift, the pony that had carried her when she was a seven-year-old huntress with tawny hair flowing loose under her little velvet toque. She gave no expression to her indignation at the sale of this old favourite, as she had done in the case of Bullfinch. If she wept for him, her tears were shed in secret. She took the sale of her pet almost as a matter of course.

"The captain thinks we have too many horses and ponies, dear, and you know dear papa was a little extravagant about his stables," said her mother apologetically, when she announced the fate of Titmouse; "but of course Arion will always be kept for you."

"I am glad of that, mamma," Vixen answered gravely. "I should be sorry to part with the last horse papa gave me as well as with the first."

To the captain himself Vixen said no word about her pony, and he made no apology for or explanation of his conduct. He acted as if heaven had made him lord

of the Abbey House and all its belongings in his cradle, and as if his wife and her daughter were accidental and subordinate figures in the scene of his life.

Despite the era of retrenchment which the new master had inaugurated, things at the Abbey House had never been done with so much dignity and good style. There had been a slipshod ease, an old-fashioned liberality in the housekeeping during the squire's reign, which had in some measure approximated to the popular idea of an Irish household. Now all was done by line and rule, and according to the latest standard of perfection. There was no new fashion in Belgravia—from a brand of champagne to the shape of a menu holder—which Captain Winstanley had not at his fingers' ends. The old-style, expensive, heavy dinners at the Abbey House: the monster salmon under whose weight the serving-man staggered; the sprawling gigantic turbot, arabesqued with sliced lemon and barberries; the prize turkey, too big for anything but a poultry show; these leviathans and megatheria of the market were seen no more. In their stead came the subdued grace of the *dîner à la Russe*, a well-chosen menu, before composing which Captain Winstanley studied Gouffé's artistic cookery-book as carefully as a pious Israelite studies the Talmud. The new style was as much more economical than the old as it was more elegant. The table, with the squire's old silver, and fine dark blue and gold Worcester china, and the captain's picturesque grouping of hothouse flowers and ferns, was a study worthy of a painter of still life. People exclaimed at the beauty of the picture. The grave old dining-room was transformed from its heavy

splendour to a modern grace that delighted everybody. Mrs. Winstanley's bosom thrilled with a gentle pride as she sat opposite her husband—he and she facing each other across the centre of the oval table—at their first dinner-party.

"My love, I am delighted that you are pleased," he said afterwards, when she praised his arrangements. "I think I shall be able to show you that economy does not always mean shabbiness. Our dinners shall not be too frequent, but they shall be perfect after their kind."

The captain made another innovation in his wife's mode of existence. Instead of a daily dropping-in of her acquaintance for tea and gossip, she was to have her afternoon, like Lady Ellangowan. A neat copper-plate inscription on her visiting-card told her friends that she was at home on Tuesdays from three to six, and implied that she was not at home on any other day. Mrs. Winstanley felt her dignity enhanced by this arrangement, and the captain hoped thereby to put a stop to a good deal of twaddling talk, and to lessen the weekly consumption of five-shilling tea, pound cake, and cream.

The duke and duchess returned to Ashbourne with Lady Mabel a short time before Christmas, and the duchess and her daughter came to one of Mrs. Winstanley's Tuesday afternoons, attended by Roderick Vawdrey. They came with an evident intention of being friendly, and the duchess was charmed with the old oak hall, the wide hearth and Christmas fire of beech logs, the light flashing upon the armour, and reflected here and there on the beeswaxed panels as on dark water. In this wintry dusk the hall looked its best, dim gleams of colour from the old painted glass mixing with the changeable glow of the fire.

"It reminds me a little of our place in Scotland," said the duchess, "only this is prettier. It has a warmer, homelier air. All things in Scotland have an all-pervading stoniness. It is a country overgrown with granite."

Mrs. Winstanley was delighted to be told that her house resembled one of the ducal abodes.

"I daresay your Scotch castle is much older than this," she said deprecatingly. "We only date from Henry the Eighth. There was an abbey, built in the time of Henry the First; but I am afraid there is nothing left of that but the archway leading into the stables."

"Oh, we are dreadfully ancient at Dundromond; almost as old as the mountains, I should think," answered the duchess. "Our walls are ten feet thick, and we have an avenue of yew trees said to be a thousand years old. But all that does not prevent the duke getting bronchitis every time he goes there."

Vixen was in attendance upon her mother, dressed in dark green cloth. Very much the same kind of gown she had on that day at the kennels, Rorie thought, remembering how she looked as she stood, with quickened breath and tumbled hair, encircled by those eager boisterous hounds.

"If Landseer could have lived to paint her, I would have given a small fortune for the picture," he thought regretfully.

Lady Mabel was particularly gracious to Violet. She talked about dogs and horses even, in her desire to let herself down to Miss Tempest's lower level; about the Forest; made a tentative remark about point lace; asked Violet if she was fond of Chopin.

"I'm afraid I'm not enlightened enough to care so much for him as I ought," Vixen answered frankly.

"Really! Who is your favourite composer?"

Violet felt as if she were seated before one of those awful books which some young ladies keep instead of albums, in which the sorely tormented contributor is catechised as to his or her particular tastes, distastes, and failings.

"I think I like Mozart best."

"Do you really?" enquired Lady Mabel, looking as if Violet had sunk fathoms lower in her estimation by this avowal. "Don't you think that he is dreadfully tuneless?"

"I like tunes," retorted Vixen, determined not to be put down. "I'd rather have written *Voi chère sapete*, and *Batti, batti*, than all Chopin's nocturnes and mazourkas."

"I think you would hardly say that if you knew Chopin better," said Lady Mabel gravely, as if she had been gently reproving someone for the utterance of infidel opinions. "When are you coming to see our orchids?" she asked graciously. "Mamma is at home on Thursdays. I hope you and Mrs. Winstanley will drive over and look at my new orchid-house. Papa had it built for me with all the latest improvements. I'm sure you must be fond of orchids, even if you don't appreciate Chopin."

Violet blushed. Rorie was looking on with a malicious grin. He was sitting a little way off in a low Glastonbury chair, with his knees up to his chin, making himself an image of awkwardness.

"I don't believe Violet cares twopence for the best orchid you could show her," he said. "I don't believe your *odontoglossum vexillarium* would have any more effect upon her than it has upon me."

"Oh, but I do admire them; or, at least, I should admire them immensely," remonstrated Vixen, "if I could see them in their native country. But I don't know that I have ever thoroughly appreciated them in a hothouse, hanging from the roof, and tumbling on to one's nose, or shooting off their long sprays at a tangent into awkward corners. I'm afraid I like the bluebells and foxgloves in our enclosures ever so much better. I have seen the banks in New Park one sheet of vivid blue with hyacinths, one blaze of crimson with foxgloves; and then there are the long green swamps, where millions of marsh marigolds shine like pools of liquid gold. If I could see orchids blooming like that I should be charmed with them."

"You paint, of course," said Lady Mabel. "Wild flowers make delightful studies, do they not?"

Vixen blushed violently.

"I can't paint a little bit," she said. "I am a dreadfully unaccomplished person."

"That's not true," remonstrated Rorie. "She sketches capitally in pen and ink—dogs, horses, trees, everything, dashed off with no end of spirit."

Here the duchess, who had been describing the most conspicuous costumes at the German baths, to the delight of Mrs. Winstanley, rose to go, and Lady Mabel, with her graceful, well-drilled air, rose immediately.

"We shall be so glad to see you at Ashbourne," she murmured sweetly, giving Violet her slim little hand in its pearl-grey glove.

She was dressed from head to foot in artistically blended shades of grey—a most unpretending toilet.

Vixen acknowledged her graciousness politely, but without any warmth; and it would hardly have done for Lady Mabel to have known what Miss Tempest said to herself when the Dovedale barouche had driven round the curve of the shrubbery, with Roderick smiling at her from his place as it vanished.

"I am afraid I have a wicked tendency

to detest people," said Vixen inwardly. "I feel almost as bad about Lady Mabel as I do about Captain Winstanley."

"Are they not nice?" asked Mrs. Winstanley gushingly.

"Trimmer's drop cakes?" said Vixen, who was standing by the tea-table munching a dainty little biscuit. "Yes, they are always capital."

"Nonsense, Violet; I mean the duchess and her daughter."

Vixen yawned audibly.

"I'm glad you did not find the duchess insupportably dreary," she said. "Lady Mabel weighed me down like a nightmare."

"Oh, Violet! when she behaved so sweetly—quite caressingly, I thought. You really ought to cultivate her friendship. It would be so nice for you to visit at Ashbourne. You would have such opportunities——"

"Of doing what, mamma? Hearing polonaises and mazourkas in seven double flats; or seeing orchids with names as long as a German compound adjective."

"Opportunities of being seen and admired by young men of position, Violet. Sooner or later the time must come for you to think of marrying."

"That time will never come, mamma. I shall stay at home with you till you are tired of me, and when you turn me out I will have a cottage in the heart of the forest—upon some wild ridge topped with firs—and good old McCroke to take care of me; and I will spend my days botanising and fern-hunting, riding and walking, and perhaps learn to paint my favourite trees, and live as happily and as remote from mankind as the herons in their nests at the top of the tall beeches on Vinny Ridge."

"I am very glad there is no one present to hear you talk like that, Violet," Mrs. Winstanley said gravely.

"Why, mamma?"

"Because anybody hearing you might suppose you were not quite right in your mind."

The duchess's visit put Mrs. Winstanley in good humour with all the world, but especially with Roderick Vawdrey. She sent him an invitation to her next dinner, and when her husband seemed inclined to strike his name out of her list, she defended her right of selection with a courage that was almost heroic.

"I can't understand your motive for asking this fellow," the captain said, with

a blacker look than his wife had ever before seen on his countenance.

"Why should I not ask him, Conrad? I have known him ever since he was at Eton, and the dear squire was very fond of him."

"If you are going to choose your acquaintance in accordance with the taste of your first husband, it will be rather a bad look out for your second," said the captain.

"What objection can you have to Roderick?"

"I can have, and I have, a very strong objection to him. But I am not going to talk about it yet awhile."

"But, Conrad, if there is anything I ought to know——" began Mrs. Winstanley alarmed.

"When I think you ought to know it you will be told it, my dear Pamela. In the meantime, allow me to have my own opinion about Mr. Vawdrey."

"But, Conrad, in dear Edward's time he used to come to this house whenever he liked, as if he had been a near relation. And he is the duchess's nephew, remember; and when he marries Lady Mabel, and the duke dies, he will be one of the largest landowners in South Hampshire."

"Very well, let him come to your dinner. It can make very little difference."

"Now you are offended, Conrad," said Mrs. Winstanley, with a deprecating air.

"No, I am not offended; but I have my own opinion as to your wisdom in giving any encouragement to Mr. Vawdrey."

This sounded mysterious, and made Mrs. Winstanley uncomfortable. But she was determined not to offend the duchess, who had been so particularly gracious, and who had sent Captain and Mrs. Winstanley a card for a dinner to be given early in January.

So Roderick got his invitation, and accepted it with friendly promptitude. He was master of the hounds now, and a good many of his days were given up to the pleasures of the hunting-field. He was an important person in his way, full of business; but he generally found time to drop in for half an hour on Mrs. Winstanley's Tuesday afternoons, to lounge with his back against the massive oaken chimney-breast and talk to Violet, or pat Argus, while the lady visitors gossiped and tittered over their tea-cups.

This last dinner of Mrs. Winstanley's was to take place a few days before

Christmas, and was to be given in honour of a guest who was coming to spend the holidays at the Abbey House. The guest was Captain Winstanley's Irish friend, Lord Mallow, the owner of Bullfinch.

Vixen's heart gave an indignant bound when she heard that he was coming.

"Another person for me to hate," she said to herself, almost despairingly. "I am becoming a mass of envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness."

Lord Mallow had spent the early morning of life in the army, it appeared, a younger son, with no particular expectations. He and Captain Winstanley had been brother officers. But the fell sergeant, death, had promoted Patrick Hay to his elder brother's heritage, and he had surrendered a subaltern's place in a line regiment to become Viscount Mallow, and the owner of a fine stretch of fertile hill and valley in County Cork. He had set up at once as the model landlord, eager for his tenantry's welfare, full of advanced ideas, a violent politician, liberal to the verge of radicalism. If the Irish Church had not been disestablished before Lord Mallow went into Parliament, he would have gripped his destructive axe and had a chop or two at the root of that fine old tree. Protestant, and loyal to the Church of England in his own person—so far as such loyalty may be testified by regular attendance at divine service every Sunday morning, and a gentlemanlike reverence for bishops—it seemed to him not the less an injustice that his native land should be taxed with the maintenance of an alien clergy.

The late Lord Mallow had been a violent Tory, Orange to the marrow of his bones. The new Lord Mallow was violently progressive, enthusiastic in his belief in Hibernian virtues, and his indignation at Hibernian wrongs. He wanted to disestablish everything. He saw his country as she appears in the eyes of her poets and song-writers—a fair dishevelled female, oppressed by the cruel Sassenach, a lovely sufferer for whose rescue all true men and leal would fight to the death. He quoted the outrages of Elizabeth's reign, the cruelties of Cromwell's soldiery, the savagery of Ginkle, as if those wrongs had been inflicted yesterday, and the House of Commons of to-day were answerable for them. He made fiery speeches which were reported at length in the Irish newspapers. He was a fine speaker, after a florid pattern, and had a great command

of voice, and a certain rugged eloquence that carried his hearers along with him, even when he was harping upon so hackneyed a string as the wrongs of "Ould Ireland."

Lord Mallow was not thirty, and he looked younger than his years. He was tall and broad-shouldered, robust, and 'a trifle clumsy in figure, and rode fourteen stone. He had a good-looking Irish face, smiling blue eyes, black hair, white teeth, bushy whiskers, and a complexion inclining to rosiness.

"He is the perfection of a commonplace young man," Vixen said, when she talked him over with her mother on the day of his arrival at the Abbey House.

"Come, Violet, you must admit that he is very handsome," remonstrated Mrs. Winstanley, who was sitting before her dressing-room fire, with her feet on a fender-stool of her own crewel work, waiting for Pauline to commence the important ceremony of dressing for dinner. "I think I never saw a finer set of teeth, and of course at his age they must all be real."

"Unless he has had a few of the original ones knocked out in the hunting-field, mamma. They go over a good many stone walls in Ireland, you know, and he may have come to grief."

"If you would only leave off talking in that horrid way, Violet. He is a very agreeable young man. How he enjoyed a cup of tea after his journey, instead of wanting soda-water and brandy! Conrad tells me he has a lovely place near Mallow—on the slope of a hill, sheltered on the north with pine woods; and I believe it is one of the prettiest parts of Ireland—so green, and fertile, and sweet, and such a happy peasantry."

"I think I'd better leave you to dress for dinner, mamma. You like a clear hour, and it's nearly half-past six."

"True, love; you may ring for Pauline. I have been wavering between my black and maize and my amethyst velvet, but I think I shall decide upon the velvet. What are you going to wear?"

"I? Oh, anything. The dress I wore last night."

"My love, it is positively dowdy. Pray wear something better in honour of Lord Mallow. There is the dress you had for my wedding," suggested Mrs. Winstanley blushing. "You look lovely in that."

"Mamma, do you think I am going to make a secondhand bridesmaid of myself

to oblige Lord Mallow? No; that dress too painfully bears the stamp of what it was made for. I'm afraid it will have to rot in the wardrobe where it hangs. If it were woollen, the moths would inevitably have it; but, I suppose, as it is silk it will survive the changes of time, and some day it will be made into chair-covers, and future generations of Tempests will point to it as a relic of their great-aunt Violet."

"I never heard anything so absurd," cried Mrs. Winstanley fretfully. "It was Theodore's chef-d'œuvre, and no doubt I shall have to pay an awful price for it."

"Ah, mamma, we are continually doing things for which we have to pay an awful price," said Vixen, with one of her involuntary bursts of bitter sadness.

SHIPS' SHOPS, BY DOCK AND QUAY.

"HEIGH, my hearts! Cheerly! Yare, yare! Take in the top-sail! 'Tend to the master's whistle! I pray you, now, keep below. To cabin, or we will not hand a rope more; you mar our labour. Cheerily, good hearts! Down with the top-mast! Yare! Lower! Bring her to try with main course! Lay her a-hold! Set her two courses!"

It was the boson. He sung this in that Tempest known to everyone these three centuries. And then there came, three hours afterwards, or, in good Master Boson's own words, in three glasses, this much extra:

"we were dead of sleep
..... all clapp'd under hatches,"

when, awaking,

"we, in all her trim, freshly beheld
Our royal, good, and gallant ship,
..... tight, and yare, and bravely rigg'd, as when
We first put out to sea."

This ship was an Italian ship, tossed on the Mediterranean. The sailors on board of her were Italian sailors. What they did and said would have been pretty much what the sailors of Columbus did and said, of Vasco di Gama, of Magellan; in which side-walk lies much enticing interest and speculation. To such of them as were Italian, in their own language the ship's yard-arms were the ship's antennæ; its ropes were funi; its masts alberi, with the main-mast the albero maestro; every fleet was an armata; every sea-coast a marina; all that was blue (their emblem) was turchino; it was quite their custom to clasp themselves

under hatches when tempests ran high and they were in danger (to be in extremest need and to be under hatches having been synonymous in Italy); but let any one of them be boson, master, mariner, cook, carpenter, cabin-boy, he would have had to have laid in his store, or his outfit, for his voyage; neither could have seen his royal, good, and gallant ship made trim, and tight, and bravely rigged, without some sort of forethought, organisation, and expenditure; and in what manner of shops, or stalls, or stores were their purchases made? How were the curious wares collected? Under what sailor-like circumstances did the merchants barter or sell?

There can come no certain answer. It is for the most part bleared and blotted out. Hints can be collected from Ephesus of a merchant, and of oil, and balsammum, and aqua-vitæ; from Jacques, at Arden, of thy loving voyage but for two months victualled; from Illyria, of a captain in this town where lie my maiden weeds; from Venice, of peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads; from other places of other appetising matter more; but the good metal that might have set all these little gem-cuttings into a jewel, that might have run and fused them together, is missing. How of similar matters to-day though? How, in this British metropolis, are seamen, and officers, and young apprentices provided and purveyed for at the present time? It is to be told easily. Begin at the vast Tower precincts. Go below bridge thoroughly; lower than fish-mart, and customs, and foreign landing-pier; past, too, the Tower postern, and sentries, and subway, and Beheading Place upon the Hill. Go as far round, indeed, as the north-moat and its waste-piece. As far round as the point where foggy streets diverging from south, south-west, south-south-west, west pure, from other points, launch themselves down out of unsalubrious and very commercial localities, radius-wise, as into a common and varied centre.

Good. Take up a position here; the moat-side gives fit retirement and obscurity; stop in it, and look round you. On this side is that high close street, that muddy elbow-jostled passage-way, the very wall or kerbstone of the teeming river. Filled is it, overbrimmingly, with sacks of nuts from the Brazils and Barcelona; with grapes from Almeria; with oranges from Seville. Filled is it, at another spot, with

cod from Newfoundland; with haddocks and herring from nearer coasts; with whelks, in wet and clattering hillocks; with other hillocks of mussels, in their deep sea-blue. It is a street crowded always, crushed, lofty, bound in; tight with men from the splashy slushy water-steps, carrying head-burdens, carrying back-burdens, pushing along their heavy way, constrained and heated. It is a street, too, where giant and tight-swathed cubes of English hops and Indian jute are ever hanging perilously in the skyway, swinging and swaying as they are being lowered into carts.

Look the other way. The district is that of lanes, and rows, and gardens; Seething, they are, and Mincing, and Mark, and Coopers, and Savage—corruptions, mostly, from excellent meanings, like the Crutched Friars they hang round, or lead to, was once the Crociati Frati, the Brothers of the Crusade; each Crociato a Crusader. The district is far from having anything lane-like, or row-ish, or garden-ish about it, as it is seen to-day though. That has been crushed out of it and built over, long and long ago, by high piles of brick and solid masonry, that are marts, that are offices, that are exchanges, that hold, however, the foreign wares—or selected samples of them—that are the wares for which the sailors cross the seas, and that form the reason why there has been such complete and costly transmutation here.

Make a move round again, still closer to the river; look where narrowed pavements, and close kerbs, and the need to be on the alert for crossing vehicles, drive everything from the footpaths but what has absolute necessity to be there, but what remains only for the rightful moment for which it came, and is then sharp and active to be away. Stay. The centre-point of interest is reached in this. Here, in the most ready grouping, are the absolute items that gather round about sailors, that are exhibited to supply the wants of sailors; here, all is of sailors, sailorly; and there must be a crossing over, for positive entrance of the streets themselves.

It is well. Here is a shop where Boson could find all his requisites waiting for him, wholesale and retail, in bulk and untied, packed carefully for compressed storing, or piecemeal for extraction as required.

That some of the articles would seem, by their names, to be the absurdest

notions (in a British, not a Yankee sense), for the merest fancy purposes, is true. There are boat-sheets, there are chain-dogs, there are shroud-trucks, there are parrel-trucks, there are jack-screws, there are sister-hooks, there are serving-mallets, there are wood hanks, and kedges. They are items, certainly, of which admirable Dibdin and Captain Marryat never made the least use, which made no appearance on board the Black-eyed Susan, and which, apparently, might be consequently expunged from the service of the British navy without any loss or disadvantage anywhere. Then some items would make it appear that Master Boson must be a dancing-master. There are log-reels, and deep-sea-reels, and fish-jigs, and scrapers, with ship's-bells to play upon, and even that other available musical instrument (in an emergency), a harpoon. From another view, Boson might seem to be an eccentric and mixed-up sort of grazier or farmer. The ship's chandler's stores, at any rate, nestling under the tall masts of the ship, have got ready for him plenty of grains, of ash and hickory, of junk, and hog's-lard. Or is it that he is a milliner? with all these hooks prepared for him—can-hooks, tackle-hooks, these pins—of the belaying sort, these prickers, these hoops, these new blocks—to fit his goods on, these block-screws—to properly adjust them, these wood buoys to dress up with his specimens, and show them off at his door? More comprehensible articles in the stores are brooms, birch-brooms, coir-brooms, mops; are paint-brushes of all sizes, cabin-brushes of all sizes, shoe-brushes of all sizes; are coir-mats, are deck-buckets, and draw-buckets—see them hanging down from the ceiling of this shop, a marine decoration, just visible in the dingy space; are cork-fenders, and long and short matted fenders—all visible by sample, it may be observed, and being those handy hempen bags for squeezing between ship and ship, and ship and anything, to prevent some ugly splintering; are water-funnels, are coir deck-scrubs, are deck-clamps, are paint-clamps, are holystones, are top-sail sheet-shackles, are capstan-bars. If ropes are wanted on board a ship, too—ropes of four-inch coil, of three-inch, of two-inch; if rattlins are wanted, hawsers, warps, fishing-lines, signal-halyards, sewing-twine, roping-twine, Hamborough lines, leads of all sorts, screw-links, Boson is "piped" to bring them forward; and they are all to be seen by dock and quay here, handy for

Boson's ordering. Ballast-shovels are to be found here, also, for the same stores; and fire-shovels, and marling-spikes, and three sorts of varnish, and mineral tar, and tallow—for all these items being under Boson's care, it must be understood, it is he who is responsible for them, and for their condition; he serves them out; he must see they are not wasted or stolen; and, like a king over any other such set of miscellaneous and heterogeneous subjects, he must execute a great deal of hard work to see they are in order.

Ships' chandlery, deceptive term as it is, has not arrived at an end, either, with this one list of necessities for one ship's officer; nor does it evince any symptom of being at an end, or of being anything near it. See these stout rolls or lumping packages of canvas; they are for the sail-maker; no other hand has any jurisdiction over them. Some of the packages are coker canvas, some long flax, some patent, some best boiled, some brown repairing, some tarpauling, some parsline, each for its purpose, each required. Here are plenty of balls of seaming-twine, also, for the sail-maker and his men to seam with; here are the needles they want, the palms, the rubbers, the sail-hooks; here is the roping-twine, with sitting-mallets, and sitting-fids, and fids without any sitting—a fid being a very innocent little pin, sometimes of iron, sometimes of wood, used to open the strands of ropes when two ends of them are going to be spliced. As for the ship's carpenters, there are so many things to be seen for them, as first one ship-shop is passed by and then another, it takes some time to get the matter into realisation. Here are barrels of tar, and pitch, and rosin; here are pitch-pots and pitch-ladles; here are caulking-irons, grind-stones, handsaws, planes, and chisels; here are nails in all their varieties: copper, countersunk, clout, brads, with the queer numbers to some of them—fourpenny, tenpenny, twentypenny, thirtypenny, and so on; here are tools of the ordinary sort, adzes, augers, pincers, gimlets; here are some whose names, to take that much of them only, sound very extraordinary, these being water-joints, thrums, forelocks, boat-roves, spoke-shears; here are some quite recognisable, such as signal-lanterns, deck-lights, deal, oak, and elm planks, spars, and crow-bars; here are others that, taken only by their names again, for example—dead-eyes, cold chisels, gouges, spikes, pen-mauls—sound piratical. Large measures

of oil lying near these—a kind of Morgiana business on a reduced scale—and large measures of paint and turpentine, are not to be stored up under the care of Mr. Carpenter; they are for yet another ship's officer—the painter. With them are ground tools, sash tools, pencil brushes, putty, mastic, litharge (vitrified lead); white, red, and black lead; and of course the colours—vermilion, chrome yellow, Indian green, and so on—that are to give the craft as much as is available for her of freshness and beauty. Other things of which there are indications—those azimuth compasses there; those hour-glasses, some to run four hours, some two hours, some half an hour; those ensigns, jacks, blue peters, pennants, Marryat's signals; that bunting of all colours—come under the general head of ship's stores, incapable of any further technical division. Look at all the lamps also. These are called globe, these are copper, these binnacle, these are for hanging. They all look everlasting, indestructible, impregnable; this sort, as may be seen, being miniature Polytechnic diving-bells, equally as certain to be as good the next century as they are this. This other lamp a little farther on is a cabin lamp; these are for the compass; these for the fore-castle; and here are lanterns—side-lanterns—for convenient dropping down at a rope's end, for any boarding or going ashoring, by help of gig or dingey, over the ship's side, or for any other ship purpose requiring a ready light. Here are speaking-trumpets, looking huge enough on close acquaintance; here are fog-horns, of momentous value when sudden mists sweep up; here are spy-glasses; here are charts—this one just spread out for example; it is the coast of Cape Colony, from Table Bay to Port Natal, on three sheets, see, with these plans of harbours and this book of directions, price ten shillings, as it is, or, mounted on cloth for captain's use, thirteen shillings and ninepence; here is the whole long list of ship's stationery, all coming in broadly as ship's stores, and comprising such articles as log slates, log books, journal books, cargo books, and tin cases for careful keeping of ship's papers. Stewards' stores, inasmuch as they approach housekeeping, and contain many things that land-kitchens and land-scelleries contain, have not enough of marine flavour to cause any long detention, except that there is a general tendency of everything to be made of

tin, and to be made so that it can be hung up; and except, finally, that this other group of things, comprehensible quite for their uses, have the odd names given to them in their shipping connection of mess-kids, of dippers, of tormentors.

Stockholm tar can be seen announced in many windows as this saunter by dock and quay proceeds. Shopkeepers from Stockholm, too, and from other decidedly un-British towns and cities, seem to have come over with their commodities as the easiest way to sell them, and to have stopped here when come, not liking to go away. There are the oddest names over shop-door and shop-window, at any rate, giving probability to this supposition. Pacynska may be read, so may Siene, Kruger, Grobb, Kuhlberg, Dahlgren, Schwenck, Breutner. Baak may be read (musical Bach undoubtedly, only submitted to alien spelling), and Waldvogel prettily, and Mendoza and Grimm (with very welcome literary flavour), and Yadala, to carry nationality as far as possible away. And France is not without its representatives. Here is a quaint little establishment owned by a Bottier Français, as he calls himself; the said bottier saying of himself on the card-board ticket underneath his name, that he "*fait proprement des raccomodages*." German notices are put up, too, to attract German sailors; and there is a bright little brass plate over there, on a bright little door, notifying that it belongs to a Scandinaviskt Skepper Hus, and is kept by one Kroon; and in this reposeful square is a reposeful Danish church; and foreign money, if it can only get into these streets, is exchanged for English money at many a convenient corner; and foreign interpreters are ready to interpret in every conceivable language—French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, Russian, Greek; and foreign faces are about—black skin, brown skin, swarthy, yellow; and there are snatches heard of foreign talk; and snatches seen of foreign and marine customs—if only a peep of ships'-masts, bunched out with tree-boughs in honour of a saint, or peeps of rigging used as clothes-lines for washed guernseys, or as drying sheds for row upon row of insignificant split fish; on the whole of which account is it that it seems quite consistent to come upon Norway Wharf, upon Denmark Street, upon Jamaica Inn; quite consistent to see, too, opposite there,

straight facing, Friday's Mariner's House, with the necessary expectation it brings of being able to hail in it that mariner of mariners, Robinson Crusoe.

Here are business-places, too, called binnacle works, with no explanation of how a binnacle got itself adopted instead of a bittacle about a century ago—the same having been effected without any sponsorship from Johnson, who never mentions the modern word; here are ballast offices; here are ship carvers, to work away on those beautiful figure-heads, and paint them gamboge and tender pink; here are ships' artists, writing up, "Ships' Portraits Taken Here," figure-head, of course, and all; here are the great Mercantile Marine Offices, where seamen go to show they are ship-worthy, and to sign ship's articles; here are places for the manufacture and the sale of boat-lowering gear; here are shops showing helms and other steering apparatus, and shops offering marine soap and marine glue; here are public-houses laying especial claim to selection because Lloyd's Shipping List may be read inside of them; here are pawnbrokers, with sextants and such like matter on second-hand sale; here are—but no, it is a remarkable fact that requires deep scrutiny—there is not one marine-store dealer to be seen, though shop-keepers of that variety might surely be expected to be here in abundance. There is one class of ships' artificers at hand, though, quaint, simple, as picturesque as picturesque can be—the mast-makers. These are to be found on the very river-edge; where vast ware-houses have worn themselves out; where buildings get low, and streets get narrow, and little odd bits of boat-yards, pushed in insidiously between bigger neighbours, are ornamented with veritable whale-jaws, by way of gate-post, as if in some tar-smear'd fishers' corner, in a remote sea-side. As these mast-makers work, they have the Thames broad open to them, as the end of their shops; they have a bend of the river, sea-way, to the left, opening with a glorious area of sky; they have a bend of the river town-way, to the right; they have the craft to pass; they have the barges, lighters, scullers, ferry-boats, high in the smooth mud underneath them; the children scrambling in and out to play, and scrambling back to land again by the half-imbedded timbers left there year by year. As these mast-makers work, too, they stand in their low-pitched shed, out

of turmoil, out of interruption; they have their one mast, or tree, lengthways—got into the shed from the water-end, to be got out of it by the water-end—and they bend over and plane, and plane, and plane still, with shavings underneath them as high up as their ankles; old iron hoops and old hemp ropes hanging from wall and ceiling; old benches here and there, with vices, screws, saws, and other tools about; and with the chance that a high tide may come and sweep in at the unshuttered river-front, sending shavings, tools, and all light matter well afloat.

Then there are shops full of sailors' literature—manuals, handy-books, and so forth. Some of the titles of these are *The Law of Storms*, *The Anchor Watch*, *Masthead Angles*, *The Channel Pilot*—in two parts, because the Channel has an immensity to be said about it—*The List of Lights of the World*, *Deviation of the Compass*, *The Sun's True Azimuth*, and other technical things belonging to astronomy and navigation. One especial piece of sailors' literature is the sailor's newspaper. In this may be read what A.B.s have been stopped by custom-house officers and fined for smuggling; what ships' stewards have purloined tins of soup and milk belonging to the ship they ought to have protected; what ships are loading and where; what is their tonnage, their destination, their captains' names, their owners; what ships are repairing; what are to be sold; whether these are desirable because they have been re-tree-nailed, poop-shortened, sheathed with yellow metal over brown felt, continued on the first letter for nine years; because they will shift without ballast, will carry a fair cargo on an easy draught, have flush decks with houses forward. Another piece of especial sailors' literature is the sailor's almanack. In this there are instructions for saving life in shipwreck by the mortar and rocket; there are diagrams of the signals for storms; there are the rates for sheltering in and going out of some of the British docks—twopence a ton, for instance, at one dock for entering only, if the vessel has come from any port in Great Britain; fourpence a ton, if from European ports north of Ushant; sixpence, from European ports south of it; eightpence, from North America; one shilling, from some parts of Africa, and so on. There are the terms for pilotage, computed on the ship's draught, and being at Shields, one shilling and three-

pence a foot in the summer months, and one shilling and sixpence in the winter; there are the fees payable to British consuls: two shillings for an oath, the same for attestation of a signature, ten shillings for a bill of health, a guinea a day for attendance at a shipwreck. There are such pieces of information as: "To enter the harbour . . . bring Kilvey old mill on with the white elbow of Swansea eastern pier;" as, "Lie to the shore, and you will have better ground and less tide;" as, "If your vessels touch upon any of the sands, particularly the Foulholme, Paull Sand, or Skitter, they will very probably be upset." There are lists of package duty, quayside tolls, dues for use of shed, ballast dues, town dues, pier dues, river moorings, lighthouse dues, refuge dues, wharfage, ramage, storage; there are the dimensions of some of the graving docks, the variations of the magnetic needle, a notice of the Fast of Ramadan, since it may be useful to cruisers in the Mohammedan states.

There are shops to be found, however, by this same dock and quay, that speak to the sailor as the man, leaving him for the moment as the seaman. In this new character Jack is to be seen carrying a big misshapen bundle, out of which there come peeps of opal-gleaming shells, of temple models veneered with cowries, of tail-ends and head-ends of rattle-snakes (safely dead), and Jack is at a disadvantage, indeed, capable only of sustaining the sort of attack that would be levelled at a child. Accordingly Jack is met, at far too perilous frequency, with large poster-boards announcing "Sailors Advance-notes Cashed, One Shilling in the Pound;" and he, poor fellow, feeling himself shabby, possibly, in his salt-stained ship-gear, in his slouching shoes, in his mere apology for a cap, goes in to the shops that seem to him so accommodating, and buys land-clothes at this rate of nineteen shillings for twenty, besides other profits, discounts, and disabilities unsuspected by him, and he dons them, and rolls along in them, quite happy. Or, supposing all advance-notes have been cashed, thus expensively, and further cashing is yet a desideratum, there are shops that bring to the difficulty yet another elucidation. These are shell-shops, parrot-shops, sailors' curio and memento shops; these are the shops where conch-shells show their hard warty backs and rosy-shaded, silky-smooth interior, where sea-

urchins lie about in prickles and pale purple; these are the shops where green parrots bite and snap at the wires of their cages, and white cockatoos, tufted with sulphur-colour, torture their little chained feet to wrest them from captivity and get away; these are the shops, too, where sailors' tiny Chinese pagodas are insinuatingly shown, with sailors' fairy inlaid cabinets, and cork cottages, and cedar bungalows, along with articulated shark-bones and preserved snakes; and it is at these that sailors can sell their transatlantic and transpacific treasures as another method of advance-noting. Sailors' lodgings run by the side of these shops also; two shillings and sixpence a week, it says, as an aristocratic price, with sixpence for a single night, to be paid, both sums, in advance (Jack's childishness, from its other and less lively side, being a fact of which dock and quay shop-keepers are well aware); whilst two shillings a-week, or fourpence a-night, also in advance, is a lower figure; and ship's apprentices are offered to be boarded in most unsanitary and repellent-looking places on easy terms. It is all well, possibly, though there exists some doubt about it. At any rate it is all well, and thoroughly well, in the midst of all these ships' shops, to come upon an old graveyard, levelled, and grassed, and gravelled, flowers growing in it, and fountains sparkling in it, and trees giving shelter, and seats giving rest; to come upon it with space enough for the sky to be seen from it widely, for the sun to shine on it brightly, whilst children play there, and old men sit and chat and read there, and nasturtiums, and mignonette, and dabbias grow in the borders and high stone vases luxuriantly, and picturesque festoons of ivy are gradually veiling over the upright tombstones embedded in the walls. So, also, is it all well to come upon another sailors' haven that must be heaven too, and so much of heaven that poor Jack shall be left there happily with all hope and halo round him. It is a quiet homely house, with a simple homely chapel one of the apartments in it, where the pews are built high, and a strong smell of tar pervades everyone, preventing poor Jack feeling out of place, and overawed, and too much open to others' gaze; and where there are quiet rooms, all days and all evenings long, for reading, writing, thinking, with books and newspapers, and pen and ink and paper, as free as the air outside; and where the chaplain will meet

anyone, of any sect, with all the charity his wide experience has given him, and the resident librarian is ever at hand with sympathy in any trouble, with advice in any perplexity, with ready reference, and a kind smile. May this place never want the necessary support to keep it where it is! Bethel it is called, and it is in St. George Street (a good name, considering the dragon it has ever kept at bay), the number of it Two-hundred and Fifteen, and the spot opposite the London Docks.

DOWN SOUTH IN FEVER TIME.

It was at the Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, in the middle of the month of September, 1853. I had devoted a week or so to exploring the marvels of the underground world; generally in company with such visitors as lingered at the hotel towards the end of the season. We were none the less sociable on account of our paucity of numbers. Our place of entertainment had not then arrogated its present title of "City." It was a homely, old-fashioned caravanserai, like a second-rate planter's house exaggerated. A long two-storey building, with one wing, both constructed of wood, it comprised more crazy corridors, and rickety rambling piazzas, than I can describe or account for. Nowhere could you fancy yourself more completely out of the world; for the hotel stood all alone on an estate of seventeen hundred acres, and there was not a town or hamlet within a score of miles. All around stretched the Kentucky wilderness—an unbroken region of mountain, valley, and forest, now becoming beautiful exceedingly with the unspeakable glories of an American autumn. Hence a sense of seclusion intensified our good-fellowship, and we improved each shining and shady hour to the utmost. I am sorry to say this goodly hostelry is now a thing of the past; it was burnt down—or up—during the Civil War; and at present you reach the pretentious one which has replaced it by means of a railway, instead of over a hundred miles of the very worst roads which ever imperilled the life or limbs of the adventurous traveller.

In this comfortable abode, then, did I make the acquaintance of a young Louisianian, who, in personal appearance, disposition, and character, so strongly reminded me of Fielding's Tom Jones, that I shall designate him by that name

in this narrative. The grandson and presumptive heir of a very wealthy planter in the "Sugar State," he was sufficiently free-handed, self-indulgent, and irascible to justify the ordinary notions about his class. We explored, not only the intricacies of the Great Cave together, but also other less famous yet remarkable "sink-holes" in the vicinity, and drank Bourbon whisky, smoked cigars, and told stories of evenings. One night he spoke as follows:

"Oh, doc, what do you think I came here for?"

"Doc" was the abbreviation of doctor, a title facetiously bestowed upon me by my companion, in consequence of my having prescribed for the ankle of one of the guides, sprained in our service.

"To see the Cave, or to dodge the yellow fever," was my not unnatural answer.

Appearing in New Orleans, on the 1st of August, the disease had not only ascended the Mississippi and desolated the unfortunate towns on either bank, but also ravaged those of the interior of some of the Southern States—in short, anticipated its course in 1878, and with far more terrible effects. Of these, however, we were then comparatively ignorant, only knowing the general facts. I had been making the tour of the great northern lakes, and Tom Jones did not care to read newspapers.

"Well, partly so," he added. "When it got up to Lake Providence, I thought it about time to quit. But I reckon it's pretty much played out now. What I wanted to say is that I'm waiting for two cousins of mine, who are coming here with nine horses, which we are going to take down the river by land."

I enquired the meaning of his rather paradoxical expression.

"Oh, right across Tennessee, through a corner of Alabama, and half Mississippi, till we strike the river opposite Carroll Parish, where I'm tew hum, as the Yankees say." The great State of Louisiana is partitioned into parishes instead of counties—some of them being larger than English shires. "You see, it'll save money, toting the animals ourselves. And then they are liable to be knocked about on the steamboats, if they ain't blown up, as I was, last fall. Won't you come along with us?"

The invitation was tempting, involving as it did such an opportunity of seeing many out-of-the-way localities, commonly

unvisited by tourists, and proportionately interesting. I had never been farther south than Kentucky. Still, there was "Yellow Jack"—a rather formidable drawback to an entirely unacclimatised Englishman. As I have said, we knew, but indefinitely, that it had prevailed in part of the region through which the intended journey lay. However, as my companion had suggested, the worst of it was certainly over, and the long-desired advent of another mythical Jack, popularly surnamed Frost, would assuredly dispose of the remainder. So, on the arrival of Tom Jones's cousins, who cordially seconded his invitation, I agreed to go. How little did I then foresee what was included in that unwise decision!

We set off accordingly, my comrades leading the five supernumerary horses, and absolving me of all responsibility but that of managing my own. The elder, and virtually the leader of the party, was, like Tom Jones, prospective heir to a Louisianian cotton plantation; and the third cousin, poor fellow, a young Kentuckian, on his way to New Orleans, there to enter upon commercial life. For discriminative purposes we will call the first Richard, and the second Oliver.

It was an expedition which I should hardly fail to remember, independent of the grim experiences marking its close. We travelled but slowly, for a journey of over four hundred miles was before us, and neither the horses nor roads were in good condition. Incidental delays, too, were not infrequent; hence, twenty miles formed the average of a day's progress: sometimes, indeed, we did not accomplish half as much. Richard had obtained a sketch of the route from a friendly drover, by observing which we should probably have fared much better than we did, for it indicated "stands" where we might procure decent food and lodging; but missing our way, almost at the outset, we were fain to put up with chance accommodation, often of the roughest description. Our path might have been compared to that of vice in the old allegory; it began pleasantly enough, but became unutterably wretched as we advanced.

Two days' riding through the rolling country of southern Kentucky, amid such autumnal foliage as no pigments ever possessed by mortal painter, or words of poet, could do justice to, brought us into Tennessee, when the scenery became grander, with hills and wild hollows

covered with mighty trees of superlative beauty. Here we first saw some newspapers from farther south, with details in them which might have bid us pause, had we not been equally hopeful and heedless. The general, and I have no doubt correct opinion is that yellow fever originates in malaria, a miasmatic condition of the atmosphere caused by the decomposition of vast quantities of vegetable matter under a semi-tropical sun. As said, it always disappears with the first breath of winter, which probably destroys the poison-germs floating in the air. It was difficult to admire the exquisite colours of the foliage—the varieties of yellows, reds, scarlets, purples, and blacks, with all their kaleidoscopic intermediate tints—which made the region a kind of fairy-land, without attributing its fantastic loveliness to the beneficent agency of frost. The weather, however, was still oppressively sultry, the skies were blue and cloudless, and the lonely roads hoof-deep with dust. We were not going, knowingly, through any infected town, so exaggerating the hopeful signs, and making light of the disadvantageous ones, we kept on.

We had our adventures, of course. Not to mention such trifles as the repeated runnings-away of the led horses, whether singly or in greater numbers; and their chase and capture, after more or less expenditure of time and oaths; or their as frequent and often successful attempts to lie down, as we were fording rivers; one of them staked himself on a fence, and, poor brute, had to be shot. Then, twice, Jones left his purse behind at our overnight's lodgings, and was obliged to return and reclaim it. It spoke well for the honesty of the people, in at least one case, that he succeeded. Our hosts were commonly persons to whom, judging from appearances, money must have proved a temptation. Their houses were mere log-huts, consisting of two rooms, with the flat roof extending over an otherwise open space between them; in which locality the meals were invariably eaten, let the hour or weather be what it might. Imagine a supper of corn-cake, bacon, and perhaps "chicken-fixings," fried to the extreme of greasy indigestibility, thus partaken of; presided over by a bony woman in a handkerchief-turban, who silently pours out some abomination passing muster as coffee, while her husband, a hard-featured and repulsive man, stares furtively at you like a savage, rarely caring even to ask an

abrupt question. This funereal repast is lighted by a candle, stuck in a bottle, and flickering in the dank night-breeze, and watched by some gaunt long-legged swine, wallowing in the adjacent mire and grunting melodiously; beyond are shuddering trees and a swamp. The rooms, too, were seldom weatherproof; we could often see the stars, or feel the rain, through the crevices between the logs. In fact, I should say that Robinson Crusoe had a luxurious time of it, compared with that of a "scallawag," or "poor white," in Alabama or Mississippi.

Other indications of the half-civilised character of the population were as peculiar. Repeatedly we were asked "whether we were not going to take them horses to New Orleans to gamble with?"—I presume by means of racing. Once we overtook a pedestrian, who, being accommodated with a ride, presently startled us with the information that he had recently "broke jail," and by displaying an extraordinary testimonial to his character, intimating that he was not the real murderer of the person for whose death he had been imprisoned, but that the writer was responsible for that little matter! A town in Alabama we found in no little state of excitement; for a house of bad character had just been torn down, six duels fought—with pistols, knives, and fists—and a gambler ducked in the river, after an abortive attempt at tarring and feathering him. This unhappy wretch, too, secreted himself under my bed at the hotel, whence he was hunted by the enraged Tuscombians. We saw a row of poor negroes—some twenty or so, men, women, and children—dressed in their best clothes, and mournfully sitting in front of a court-house, or town-hall, for inspection, before sale. Of course, the spectacle of slaves working in the cotton-fields, and looking scarcely human, was common enough. But this scanty itinerary would assume impossible dimensions were I to chronicle all such details. I will therefore add but one more illustration of Southern life, taken from our own party. A difference of opinion occurring between Tom Jones and Richard, on the question of fording a wide and deep river instead of paying the toll over a bridge, the former not only swam his horse to a little island in the stream (by way of demonstrating the feasibility of his proposition), but on returning, and renewing the altercation, actually wanted his more prudent cousin to dismount

and settle the matter in the road—with revolvers!

The hot weather was varied with storms of almost tropical fury as we progressed, and occasionally we rode for days through persistent, pelting rain. Always the nights were chill, and sometimes a deathly-cold "norther" blew, penetrating us to the very marrow; insomuch that, except in the sultry noon, or close to a blazing log-fire, I never felt warm for the remainder of the journey. Still no frost had yet occurred. Our health began to suffer from the exposure; I and young Oliver being the worst affected of the party. We felt sick, in the English as well as the American application of the word, and our limbs ached; but attributing these disorders to the diet and inclemencies of the weather, to which, indeed, they might be fairly imputed, and not permitting ourselves to be discouraged, we held on. It was upon entering Mississippi, on the fourteenth day of our journey, that we first came upon the unsuspected vicinity of the yellow fever. We had ridden an exceptionally long distance—above thirty miles—for an hour or more in darkness, mud and water, through a dismal swamp, sometimes over perilous bridges formed of loose planks or fallen trees. In the very heart of this dreary region was a hut, where we drew rein to make the customary enquiry about lodging. A voice, faint and hollow, as though scarcely of this world, bade us "Pass on," adding, "All down with the fever." And thenceforth we rode through a plague-stricken country.

The disease was abating, but had prevailed through all the western part of the State, capriciously, after its fashion, passing over certain localities to wreak its virulence in others. We heard dismal stories as we advanced; many of them exaggerated, of course, but originating in a pitiful reality, as was but too evident. Some of the towns presented a most doleful appearance; the houses and stores being closed, their windows broken, and placarded with intimations whither the late occupants had fled, or where medicines might be bought. Grass grew on the sidewalks and in the deserted streets; and the few gaunt and miserable-looking inhabitants, whom the sound of our horses' hoofs attracted to the doors, gazed wonderingly at the supposed daring "drovers," whose greed induced them to defy the pestilence. Communication with other places had mostly ceased; even the post-

offices were closed, the postmasters having died or departed—often to be overtaken by fate elsewhere. Telegraph-clerks had “wired” a farewell message to the next operator, and succumbed to the destroyer. Newspapers had stopped; editors, compositors, pressmen, all were dead. Whole families had been swept off in a few hours; none being left to procure the rites of burial; the dread odours of decomposition sometimes first proclaiming what had happened. People who had lost all their relatives lived in “shanties” by the roadside, awaiting the passionately prayed-for frost and the disappearance of the dreadful epidemic. Everybody talked low, as if in a house of mourning, or overshadowed by calamity. The very forests had an air of funereal gloom, swathed as they were by that long grey parasitical moss which imparts such a peculiarly mournful aspect to Southern trees, or with its gigantic cobwebs hanging from their branches. The pestilence, like a nightmare, seemed to oppress creation.

It had rained intermittently for two days, yet still we rode on, for there was no turning back, and we hoped, on crossing the Mississippi, to leave the yellow fever behind. I was very ill, though Oliver had apparently rallied; and when, by the middle of the third day, we reached a house of the better sort, we determined to halt—of course, if the occupants would entertain us. In a comfortable room we found the family at dinner—what a contrast the scene presented to drenched and way-worn travellers may be imagined. My appearance attracted observation, and when, in answer to our host's enquiry, I acknowledged that I felt sick, the man asked, in natural trepidation: “You haven't got the yellow fever?” at the same time hastily ordering one of the children who had approached me to come away. I respected the father's feelings, and reassuring him, was presently allowed to go upstairs, where I lay on a blanket on the floor, and partook of such remedies as were available for what was not, thank Heaven, the yellow fever, but a bad bilious attack, with the accompaniments of exhaustion, exposure, and unwholesome food. In two days I was enabled to continue our journey.

The demon of the plague had passed me by, but only to take another victim. The very next morning frost appeared—sharp, hard, and clear—a hoary rime whitening all the vegetation. Everybody was pro-

portionately exhilarated—everybody but the poor lad Oliver. He seemed unusually depressed in spirits and torpid, and when questioned, complained of cold and a slight headache, and then of fever, and, after awhile, of pains in the back. He wouldn't lay by for them, he said; it was nothing—he should soon be better. But presently his eyes were suffused, dull, and heavy, his sight was dim, and sometimes double. He betrayed confusion of mind, and a kind of drowsy restlessness. The tokens were upon him. The blessed change in the weather had come too late, and he was stricken with the yellow fever.

Justly alarmed at his condition, his cousins—who could not have been kinder, either to him or me—insisted on stopping and obtaining medical aid. Accordingly we spurred onwards to Benton, a little town in Yazoo County, not far from the Mississippi. I shall never forget our entrance. In spite of the frosty morning the day had proved sultry, and the evening was close and oppressive; there was, too, a glare of strange unnatural colours in the western sky, orange and green predominating. In that direction, only ten miles off, lay Yazoo City, where we were told half the population had died; it was always a sickly place, our informant added; the name meant that in Indian, and he reckoned Yellow Jack would use it up entirely this time. Hastily we got poor Oliver to bed, and procured a physician, who gave us but little hope. Our friend had reached the crisis of the disease, he said, before he was aware of it; the chances were thus badly against him.

He prescribed a mustard bath and cathartics, but the fever increased rapidly, and soon the poison pervaded the entire system. Oliver tossed and raved in agony. Thus he continued for thirty-six hours. Then the disease seemed to abate, and gradually to pass off—joy and hope began to dawn upon us. “He is better, doctor; he will live?” we anxiously enquired. But the physician answered evasively. How did he know? Could he see into the patient's stomach, and perceive the dark brown liquid, there collecting, which marked the process of dissolution? Suddenly the fever returned, but now the paroxysm was more brief. Again Oliver was quiet, but not so hopeful as before. He was weak, prostrate, and deathly pale, but he had no fever; his pulse was regular, and his skin moist. “He will get well,” we insisted. The doctor shook his head

ominously. Presently drops of blood appeared on the sufferer's lips; they had oozed from the gums; a bad, but not necessarily a desperate sign. Then he had a hiccough, followed by the dreadful fatal vomit. In a few hours all was over.

We buried the poor lad temporarily and crossed the Mississippi, subsequently sending for the body. It was but a dismal sojourn that I had on the cotton plantations near Lake Providence, though my hosts were friendly enough. Others of their kin had died of the fever. From nine to ten thousand persons fell victims to it throughout the South that year; it was the worst visitation ever known in the United States of America.

A PARIS FÊTE IN THE FOUR-TEENTH CENTURY.

No fête of the Second Empire was ever half so grand as what was perhaps the finest of all the fine things which were to be seen at various times during last year's Exposition. Several English magazines have described it, and all agree in naming as its distinguishing feature the part taken in it by the Parisians themselves; it was the people's fête, not merely or chiefly an official affair. In this it resembled the old fêtes at the coronation or marriage of kings, in the days when the monarchy was a thoroughly popular institution. Besides being popular, in the sense of having the people to take an active part in them, those mediæval fêtes were fully as splendid as ours, save in the matter of lighting up. In the daytime nothing could be grander than the cavalcades, the streets hung with tapestries, the tournaments, the processions; but after dark, though the chroniclers tell us that candles in every window turned night into day, it must have been but a foggy kind of day.

A grand fête was that which gossiping old Nicholas de Bray so lovingly describes at the coronation of Louis the Eighth. He was popular for his father's sake; for had not Philip Augustus beaten John and Otho—England and Germany—at Bouvines? and had he not begun his reign by bringing the Duke of Burgundy to order—inaugurating thereby the long struggle in which the French kings, for their own ends, sided with the people against the great

nobles? As for his ill-treatment of his second wife, Ingelberga of Denmark, whom he repudiated for the Tyrolese Agnes of Méran, his people might well forgive him that; for, after letting them suffer an eight months' interdict, he gave way, and reinstated Ingelberga. Louis the Eighth, moreover, was descended through his brother from the house of Charlemagne, so that people began to talk of the restoration of the old line with its glorious memories. Nicholas tells how everyone came out dressed in his best; how the burgesses curtained the whole city with rich cloth of divers colours; how troops of young people of both sexes danced in every open space, while singers and viol-players swarmed in till there were more of them in Paris than one would have thought all France contained. Wonder of wonders, too, the rich did not keep the poor at a distance, "everyone kept open house, and high and low ate and drank side by side." When the citizens brought their presents—mostly wonderful pieces of embroidery—to the king, he showed his thanks by emancipating his serfs, and by including in an amnesty all who had conspired against his father. A minstrel then came and played and sang before Louis, and in his song exhorted him to remember justice and mercy; and he replied that "he would deal out to this people, to him by God entrusted, the maintenance of the laws in what to them was due." John, too, though he came to the throne in evil days, after the misfortune of Cressy, and was destined to lead the way to the greater misfortune of Poitiers, was immensely popular when he succeeded his unlucky father. Why he was surnamed "the good" it is hard to tell; or why, after crushing down the states-general, and bloodthirstily stamping out the jacquerie, he should have been welcomed from his English prison "with universal transports of joy and gratitude." When he came to the throne, however, Paris was naturally en fête. The streets were tapestried; the guilds of workmen marched, some guilds on foot, some on horseback, dressed in their several costumes; the city kept holiday for a whole week, and the king made a vast number of knights, to each one of whom he gave a set of robes, rare furs lined with silk and cloth of gold. "It was a grand sight to see him in Notre Dame, sitting on a throne high and lifted up, in robes of cloth of gold, as

rich as could be made, and all the young newly-made knights seated below at his feet on seats covered with cloth of gold. So sat the king in his royal state, with a crown very rich, and beyond measure precious, on his head."

But the fête of fêtes was that which Charles the Sixth gave when he knighted his young cousins, the King of Sicily and the Duke of Maine. Froissart, Monstrelet, Olivier de la Marche, outdo one another in their fulness of detail. Everything was done according to strict rules of chivalry; for Charles, "the well-beloved," unlike several of his predecessors, had gone in thoroughly for fendalism against progress; and the great victory of Roosbeke over Philip van Artevelde and the Flemings, in which twenty-five thousand Flemings were killed in half an hour, ruined the popular cause in France as well as in the Netherlands. Charles exacted nearly a million livres from Paris alone as the price of pardon for having dared to wish for municipal liberties; but this vast sum can have gone only a little way in paying for his fêtes. On the first day of the fête that I speak of was held a grand tournament, the king bearing on his device a golden sun, and, with the princes of the blood, keeping the field against all comers. Every knight was led to the entry of the lists by a lady richly dight, who, mounted on a palfrey, guided his horse by a golden ribbon. When they had come inside the lists the lady dismounted, gave her knight a courtly kiss, and exhorted him to comport himself valiantly; she then took her place on the seats, which were hung with rich tapestries. After three days of jousting came a masquerade, of which amusement Charles was very fond. We remember how a fright at one of his later masquerades cost him his reason. The next day, at St. Denis, was a grand funeral service in honour of Messire Duguesclin, constable of France. These violent contrasts were not thought inconsistent in those days; and the ceremony was so grand as to be a sort of fête in itself. De Clisson, Duguesclin's comrade, the conqueror at Roosbeke, headed the procession, then came the two marshals of France, the dead man's brother, and the officiating bishop. Then a crowd of dukes—Burgundy, Bourbon, Lorraine, Bar, &c., many of whom afterwards fell at Agincourt; and some of whom, like Burgundy and

Orleans, helped our Henry by their quarrels more even than did his own generalship and the imbecility of his opponents. Four war-horses these noble dukes led up to the high altar. Then came six lords carrying shields blazoned with the dead man's arms, and then the princes of the blood bearing his two-handed sword, while other nobles followed with helmets and banners.

So near to this as to form almost a portion of the fête came the entry into Paris of the young queen, Isabella of Bavaria. She was, perhaps, the worst queen whom France ever had; and her cruel neglect of her poor insane husband, while she joined in one or other of the intrigues which were tearing France to pieces, makes her memory hateful. But she had not then shown her true nature; and Charles was as much in love with her as when he had married her, a girl of fourteen, five days after he had first seen her at Amiens. The marriage was a trick of the Duke of Burgundy, who had married his son to a Bavarian princess, and wished his king to be allied to the same family; and of the Duchess of Brabant, who took Isabella on a pilgrimage to St. John of Amiens, and instructed her how to behave so as to make a favourable impression on the young king. They met at Arras; and Isabella went down on her knees, and played her part so well, that Charles could not take his eyes off her. Five days after she was taken to Amiens cathedral in a carriage (one of the earliest on record) covered with cloth of silver. And now, in 1382, after having been kept out of Paris for four years, Charles brought in his bride, a girl still, amid the tumultuous joy of the very people who had made such desperate efforts for municipal self-government (the Commune, in other words) at the beginning of his reign.

The queen was in a litter—she had perhaps found the springless carriage uncomfortable, despite the cloth of silver—as were most of the royal duchesses; the Duchess of Touraine rode a splendid palfrey. Each litter was escorted by dukes and noble knights. No sooner had the procession left St. Denis than it was met by the élite of the Paris bourgeois, on horseback, dressed in red and green. When they reached the first gates of St. Denis, they found heaven itself ready to receive them, for there was set up one of the tableaux vivants of which people in those days were so fond. It represented

a heaven full of clouds, on which sat little children representing angels, among them was Our Lady with the infant Jesus in her arms, and a toy windmill to keep the child in good humour. The children were singing as hard as their little throats would let them, and overhead shone a golden sun emblazoned with the arms of France and Bavaria. Of course the fountains flowed with wine, but the fountain in the street of St. Denis surpassed the rest. It was surmounted by a sky-blue canopy spotted with golden lilies, the pillars supporting which bore the escutcheons of all the great nobles of France. A bevy of fair girls, splendidly dressed, with dainty caps of cloth of gold, stood round, singing and offering to all passers-by hypocras and other rare wines in goblets of silver gilt. A little farther on was another tableau. On a huge platform was built a castle, in which were Saladin and his Saracens. To attack them came King Richard the Lion-hearted and his knights, each with his shield correctly blazoned. But before making the attack, Richard presented himself before the King of France, who was seated on a magnificent throne with twelve peers of the realm around him, and respectfully asked leave to go and fight the worshippers of Mahound. When the question of doing homage, which in reality cost so much bloodshed, was thus settled to the satisfaction of all the onlookers, the sham fight began. But the choicest tableau of all was at the second gate of St. Denis, afterwards pulled down by Francis the First. Here was depicted the very heaven of heavens, with Father, Son, and Spirit, each amid appropriate surroundings, combining to do honour to the young king and queen. Here the angels were older than those of the first heaven, and were represented by young girls chosen for their beauty, who sang:

Noble dame des fleurs de lys,
Soyez royne du paradis
De France, ce beau pays.

The whole street of St. Denis (and those who have been to Paris know how long it is) was hung with silk, or camlet, or tapestry. One of the tapestries—these old chroniclers go into such details—was something quite different from the common ruck of scripture pieces and allegorical figures, and scenes from the Tale of Troy or the story of the Round Table. It showed a countryman thoughtfully watching a spider web which hung between two trees.

A fool with cap and bells comes up and says to him:

Bonhomme, diz moy, si tu daignes,
Que regardes-tu en ce bois?

Gaffer, tell me, an you please,
What are you staring at among those trees?

The other replies:

Je pense aux toiles des ariègues
Qui sont semblables à nos droitz;
Grosses mouches en tous endroitz
Passent; les petites sont prises.

These webs that hang from tree to tree
So like our laws they seem to me;
Big flies break through whenever they please,
The small flies get a deadly squeeze.

The fool answers him:

Les petitz sont subjects aux loiz;
Et les grands en font à leurs guises.

Small folks must mind the law's behest;
Great folks make laws as suit them best.

One could wish that that particular bit of tapestry had come down to us; and one wonders whether the freedom of speech which it exhibited escaped punishment from a king who had helped to crush down the Flemings.

The next "pleasant invention" was at the Châtelet. There was displayed a park planted with trees; hares and rabbits were playing in the grass, birds singing on the boughs, and in the centre of the park was a castle with its towers, every battlement being guarded by a man-at-arms. On the castle-terrace was the king's "bed of justice," that device by which despotic French kings made parliaments of none effect. Originally, when the king was sick, a committee of parliament was summoned to his bedside, and his majesty signed the ordonnances, which then became law. As no questions were likely to be asked at such a time, the royal councillors could pass what they pleased; and the plan was found to work so well that, by-and-by, when he was in perfect health, the king would go in state to the House, and announce, through the chancellor, that he wished such and such an ordinance entered, then and there, on the parliamentary records without discussion. And here comes out the essential difference between our parliament, with its great charter and its centuries of comparative independence, and those ghosts of parliament—mere shadowy affairs—which in France hardly deserved the name. When Queen Elizabeth attempted to get her own way with the Commons, she—Gloriana though she was, her people's pride—was met with such a firm, though courteous denial, that she soon gave up trying.

And when Charles the First, less clear-sighted, tried to force his will on the House, we all know how he was baffled. In a French parliament, however, the presence of the king was supposed to override all law and all freedom. When his majesty appeared, justice ceased to preside, in fact, was put to bed, and from that *lit de justice* dared not open her mouth. No discussion was allowed, no more than if the king had been so ill that he could not bear talking, and, whatever the edict might be, it was registered and signed in due form: "*Faict en parlement, le roy séant en son lit de justice.*" Well, on this bed of justice by the *Châtelet* sat, not the king, but St. Anne, the guardian of the realm; "And then," says the chronicler, "out of the park came forth a big white stag with gold collar, which shook its head and moved its eyes." This was to represent the king's crest; for in those days each king chose his own. Our own Richard the Third, we remember, chose the wild boar. "An eagle and a lion set upon this stag to destroy it; but it took up, to defend itself, the sword of justice which lay on the bed, and twelve young girls, sword in hand, came also to protect it, figuring the twelve great peers who would stand by the French king." The bridge of Notre Dame was even more richly tapestried than St. Denis's Street; and here was seen a wonder of another kind: "just as her majesty passed, a Genoese of marvellous adroitness came from the top of the cathedral tower, down on a sudden, dancing on a tight-rope, and holding in each hand a lighted torch." When this mediæval Blondin had safely landed, the procession moved on through the narrow streets of the city, the veritable old *cité* of which Baron Haussmann has left scarcely a trace, and at last reached the doors of Notre Dame. Here the royal dukes helped the queen to get out of her litter, and she was met by the clergy in their richest vestments. The archbishop placed the crown on her head, she made her offerings—rich and costly they were—at the altar, and then she was escorted to the palace by the light of more than five hundred torches.

Where was the king all this time? He was so fond of masquerades, that he dressed up as a common man, and mixed with the crowd in order to see the fun. The chronicler says he got more than one shrewd blow from the javelin-men for wanting to press too close to the royal cavalcade.

That was enough for one day; but it

was soon followed up by other fêtes as splendid. The Duke of Orleans, the king's brother, he who was afterwards brutally murdered by the Burgundians, married Valentina, the young daughter of the Duke of Milan. At their wedding Milan as well as Paris held festival. And then Charles began a royal progress, which turned each town for the time being into a scene of revelry. His majesty and suite required for dinner and the next day's breakfast six oxen, eighty sheep, thirty calves, seven hundred pullets, two hundred pigeons, to say nothing of game and fish and small birds. The cost of entertaining the royal party for a day was reckoned at two hundred and thirty *livres*. Besides this, all the larger towns gave handsome presents of plate and jewels. Lyons must have found loyalty an expensive virtue, for Charles and his uncles stayed there two months. Poor Charles! never was there, amongst the many wretched reigns from which France has suffered—and it is the comparative folly of her kings which mainly set France at a disadvantage with England in the Middle Ages—one so wretched, so altogether unredeemed by anything of which the nation could be proud, as that of Charles the Sixth. The king mad, for he never recovered the burning he had at a masked ball; suspicious in his lucid intervals of all around him, except of the gentle unselfish Valentina, whom the Burgundians managed to banish from court on a charge of sorcery; the Queen Isabella living the most scandalous life that any French queen had lived since Merovingian days; the rival factions of Orleans and Burgundy tearing the country to pieces, and every now and then getting up a massacre in Paris; and our Henry the Fifth winning Agincourt, taking Caen and Rouen, and at last getting crowned in the capital! Such a reign, so pitiable in all respects, has rarely been seen in the world's annals; and yet there was more money spent in fêtes by Charles the Sixth than perhaps by any king till Louis the Fourteenth's time. France was spending against Burgundy; rivals in other things, they were rivals also in magnificence. In personal splendour the Duke of Burgundy far outshone the king. As far as jewels went, he must have been the Prince Esterhazy of his day. His saddle and bridle were set with diamonds, his dress was embroidered with them, and the purse which hung at his belt was covered with them. He had the whim of wearing a

fresh set every day, so no wonder the value of his jewels was estimated at what would now be more than a million sterling. The archers of his suite were dressed as grandly as the proudest nobles of France. But the wonder of all was the sideboard, which was set up, wherever he halted, under a tent of velvet lined with silk embroidered all over with leaves and spangles of gold, and blazoned with the arms of all his different lordships. This sideboard was covered with gold and silver plate, so massive and so curiously wrought as perhaps the world never saw before or since.

One of the grandest features of all these fêtes must have been the multitude of horses in the processions. Even when the penurious Louis the Eleventh made his entry into Paris, the horses, all gaily caparisoned, numbered more than twelve thousand; on some occasions there were more than thrice as many.

England had its fêtes too. Witness the coronation of Edward the First in 1274. The whole of Palace Yard, Westminster, was turned into a grand banqueting-hall, and the tables were kept spread a whole fortnight. All comers alike were feasted. Of open-air kitchens there was, we read, a number too great to be counted. Beast as well as man was well entertained; the churchyard of St. Margaret's being filled with stabling. On the coronation day alone were drunk one hundred and sixteen casks of wine. The cost of buildings and wine alone amounted to two thousand five hundred and sixty-five livres, one sol, one denier (how exact those old budget-makers were); a sum which, looking to the purchasing power of money in those days, has been calculated to be equivalent to more than forty thousand pounds of our money.

Charles the Sixth's fêtes made so large a hole in the revenue that his ministers were at their wits' end. "Cast the royal treasure in big ingots," was the advice of Lord-treasurer Noviant, "and then his majesty won't be so easily able to spend them." So it was agreed to make out of all the silver in the treasury a big stag, the king's device. There was only silver enough to make his head, and the head soon got melted down to make money. Paying, the Parisians found, is far less pleasant than sight-seeing, yet it was its inevitable consequence. Nowadays, everyone pays for admission to Exhibition, fêtes, and such like; so the cost, though still great, falls less heavily than it did of old on those who provide the show. Let us hope the modern

Parisians will not be overburdened by the cost of all the splendour with which this past year they have dazzled the world.

I spoke of lighting—what a pity the electric light was perfected a few months too late. How grand an item it will make in our future fêtes, if only the weather is dry enough for it to work well. Fire-works, by-the-way, were known in the Middle Ages; perhaps they came overland from China. The Italians improved them greatly in the sixteenth century; but they don't seem to have been used in France till Henry the Fourth's reign, when Sully took the country by surprise with a magnificent display on the plain of Fontainebleau.

Fêtes, we know, went on in France under every change of government. Perhaps what makes those of Charles the Sixth so specially famous is, first of all, the contrast between all that magnificence and the wretched state of the country; and next, that they are described at unusual length by several chroniclers. Paris was always great at fêtes. It did not go in for monsters like Gayant and his family; the huge figures which are carried round Douai at the Ducasse, as it is called; or like Graonille at Metz, and Gargonille at Rouen, or the horse of St. Victor at Marseilles. But it had its own midsummer feast, when all the guilds and all the royal and municipal authorities paraded the city with garlands over their shoulders; and it also heartily entered into the fêtes of its kings. *Le roi s'amuse* might be said pretty often of those old French kings; and, whenever he took his pleasure, the people amused themselves along with him. They amuse themselves still, and invite the rest of the world to come and help them make merry; and though the contrast between the fêtes of to-day and those of five hundred years ago is strong enough, the people are still the same—light-hearted, easily drawn away from thinking of sorrows or troubles, and with a natural genius for making tasteful displays.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII. A STATEMENT BY JULIA CARMICHAEL.

IN compliance with the wish of Captain Dunstan, who is desirous of having an exact account of the circumstances that occurred during mystay at Bevis, I purpose

to set them down here in the order in which they took place. It is a relief to my own mind also to recapitulate them thus carefully, as in doing so I shall be able to reduce my responsibility, in the matter that is of such pressing and painful importance to me and to others, to its true proportions, instead of being, as I sometimes am, oppressed by a terrible misgiving that it was all my fault.

I arrived at Bury House at the beginning of the second week in May, and a week later I went, at the invitation of Mrs. Dunstan, to Bevis. I looked forward with great pleasure to this visit; and previous circumstances had invested the occasion with an interest which led me to regard Janet with close observation. She received me with the utmost kindness, and during the short time that we were together on the first day, I did not notice any symptoms of ill-health or unhappiness about her. It was late in the afternoon when I arrived at Bevis, some people dined there that day, and it was not until the following morning at breakfast that I was struck with a change in her appearance and manner. She was looking very handsome, I thought, but far from well; and there was something dispirited and restrained about her which struck me painfully. I learned from what was said at breakfast that Captain Dunstan was going out to dinner on that day, and it was arranged that Janet and I should walk down to the Vicarage. After Captain Dunstan left us, I asked her whether she was feeling well; and she said not quite, but a walk would do her good. She then proposed to show me the house and gardens, and I agreed to this. I ought to record in this place that there was not, either in her demeanour, or in that of Captain Dunstan, the slightest trace of any disagreement or disunion between them. She was gentle and sweet, as she always was, but there was a decided change in her, and I could not help wondering whether he was aware of it. I dwell on my perception of this change, because I was led by it into saying what I did afterwards say to him. The house interested me very much, and Janet told me all about the former disposition of it, in Mrs. Drummond's time. She was cheerful, but not elated and talkative as I should have expected her to be, and she said very little respecting herself or her own feelings. She left me to attend to some matters connected with her intended call at the

Vicarage, and after luncheon, at which Captain Dunstan was present, Janet and I set out together for the Vicarage. Before leaving the dining-room, I had chanced to say that I must write some letters before post-hour; and Captain Dunstan invited me to use the library for that purpose, adding that I need not mind about post-hour, as he was going to dine in the town, and would take my letters.

We took the private way through the park along the avenue of elms, and Janet talked a good deal, but not of herself, or her position, chiefly of my prospects, and a little of my cousin, Mrs. Thornton. Laura had been a frequent subject of conversation between us formerly, but I would not have spoken of her now, had not Janet done so, because I concluded that Captain Dunstan had told his wife of the circumstances in the past connected with himself and Laura, and that it was just possible she might feel some reluctance or awkwardness about the mention of her. However, she did introduce the subject, and after a little I perceived, to my great embarrassment and regret, that she was not aware that her husband and Mrs. Thornton were even acquainted. This seemed to me quite unaccountable, but an instant's reflection showed me that whatever his reason might be, it was not my business to reveal to his wife what Captain Dunstan had concealed from her, and therefore I said nothing on the point. Janet questioned me closely about Laura, and spoke with her usual feeling and sympathy of Mr. Thornton's death. Mrs. Cathcart was expecting us; nothing particular happened while I remained, but that was for a short time only. I left Janet with Mrs. Cathcart, and returned alone to the house, by the same way. I went at once to the library, and began to write my letters. The weather was very fine, and the French windows, giving upon the terrace like doors, were open. A table was set ready for my use close to one of these windows, and I had been writing for more than an hour when Captain Dunstan crossed the terrace from the garden side, and asked me whether he might come in for a few minutes' talk with me? I was a little surprised, but I said Yes, and that my letters were ready for him. I could not now tell how it was that he began to speak of Laura; though I had almost made up my mind, if the opportunity offered, to say something to him about the awkwardness to myself of Mrs. Dunstan's not knowing

that they were acquainted; still, when he introduced the subject abruptly, I was completely taken aback. I impute to my being confused, and to his perceiving it, the unfortunate conversation that ensued, for I have no doubt his first intention was merely to question me about the sad event that had taken place at Nice, and that he was not aware that I had any reason to believe him to be, or rather to have been, especially interested in Laura. He looked so strangely at me that I had to attempt to explain the confusion into which a very natural-seeming question had thrown me, and I said something to the effect that it would have been better if this subject had been openly talked of before Mrs. Dunstan. I have no apology to offer, either on his part or my own, for the revelation that followed; my business is only to narrate, not to excuse it.

What I learned from Captain Dunstan was, then, that he had never ceased to love my cousin Laura. Plainly stated, there is the truth; but it is indispensable that I should record here that he acknowledged it with vehement emotion, the result of the revulsion against self-restraint, of the yielding to the strong temptation of my presence. I had but lately left her, he said, and it was so long since he had heard of her. I had never seen Captain Dunstan under the influence of any strong feeling before, and I was excessively surprised and shocked. He found that I was aware that he had seen Laura since her marriage, and he protested that he had tried hard to forgive her treachery to him, and even to forget herself since then. He recapitulated all the circumstances of their brief love story, telling me much that I had not previously known, and dwelling emphatically upon the hardness of his destiny in having the fatal decision of Admiral Drummond against him reversed too late. He then referred to my meeting with him in Paris on my way to Nice, and spoke of his feelings in a manner which distressed me very much; dwelling upon the pursuing destiny that divided him from Laura. Here it becomes necessary that I should repeat the words that were said as exactly as I can.

"You little knew what you told me then; that I had again lost her, or, at least, had lost the chance I might have had. It was hard, was it not? The first time she would not wait for me; the second time I had not waited for her!"

"Hush! hush! For Heaven's sake,

think of what you are saying! Why do you say such things to me, to yourself?"

"I don't know; I can't tell; there's something stronger than myself that makes me do it. You say she has never once spoken of me all this time; never mentioned me. Does she think I do not care for her sorrow?"

"Indeed, Captain Dunstan, she does not, believe me; but she remembers nobody, thinks of nothing except the dreadful loss she has sustained."

"I suppose so; no doubt you are right. And so it ought to be. Living and dead, Thornton is the winner."

"What a dreadful state of mind you have let yourself fall into!" And then I added, by an irresistible miserable impulse: "What, in Heaven's name, induced you to marry poor Janet?"

"Ah, what!" Captain Dunstan moved from the place he had been standing at, and, leaning against the window-jamb, spoke very distinctly: "You think I was wrong to marry her?"

"I think you were cruel and false to her, and foolish. You did not love her; you knew she loved you. Did you marry her for the sake of pity?"

"No, Miss Carmichael; I married her for the sake of gratitude."

"Gratitude!"

"Yes. What has driven me to speak thus to you, I don't know; but as I have done so, I will be thorough; I will tell you all about it. There's nothing to come of telling you; there's nothing to hope for from that, or from anything; but I will tell you all the same. You are right; I did know that Janet loved me; I had it from the very best authority; and I owed to her all I had in the world. It was no fault of hers that all the good was taken out of it; and the fact enabled me to make her the only possible return. If Laura had only waited for me I should have never known that I had incurred a debt of gratitude to Janet, which I could not, indeed, when I did become aware of it, pay in love, but which shall be faithfully discharged, so help me God! It was she who, by refusing the inheritance herself, made me master of Bevis; and though I had no heart to give her, I could restore her to her home, secure her position in the world, and make her happy. That Mrs. Drummond wished me to marry Janet, I knew from Mrs. Drummond herself, and—it has turned out very well. Janet, who deserves to be happy, for she is very good,

is quite happy as my wife, and I am—well, we need not mind about that. I must say again that I have not the remotest idea of what it was that made me say all this to you. I have been wishing to hear the particulars which you have told me, of course, and intending to ask you for them, but I never contemplated the possibility of betraying myself in this way, and I suppose it will not be easy for you to forgive me for having done so.”

“That is nothing. What it is not easy to forgive is what you have done to her. Oh, Captain Dunstan, how could you be so cruel or so stupid? What is the estate you owe to her, as you tell me, in comparison with the heart she has given you to be broken?”

“Broken? And why? You don’t take me, I hope, for the sort of person who could visit his own disappointment on a woman, who is not only blameless, but everything that is excellent—too faultless, indeed? I daresay you hate me, Miss Carmichael, but you need not despise me unnecessarily. Janet is quite safe with me, I assure you; your own observation might tell you that. I do not think she has an ungratified wish, an unconsulted taste; if she has, it is her own fault, certainly not mine.”

“You are trying to justify what cannot be justified. You have taken the pure gold of a perfect love and trust from her, and given her false coin in exchange.”

“You are talking—I suppose I must not say nonsense, for politeness’ sake, but, at all events, like a romantic girl yourself. Janet will never be unhappy, I hope; she never shall be, if I can prevent it; and, I daresay, if Thornton had not died, I should never have regretted my marriage for my own sake; but I never thought of such a thing happening as that, and it completely upset me; and what I now have to do is my very best, so that I shall never have to regret it for hers.”

I need not repeat what I answered to this; it did not affect events; I need only set down that I said all that was in my heart, in very strong and earnest words; urging upon him that the only hope, the only chance of safety for Janet’s peace and their joint future was, not the successful concealment of the passion which he guiltily cherished in his heart, but its eradication. I don’t know what I said, where the words came from to me; I was all the time a prey to bewildering distress and pity, and to a dim vague

fear. Captain Dunstan listened to me very patiently, becoming calm and like himself again while I was speaking; and when I paused, he said in his usual tone:

“If I make no answer to all you say, it is not because I disregard it; it is because I am a man, and you are a woman, and you don’t understand. We must never speak of this again; it must be like a dream to both of us; let me only say that I count upon your friendship for Janet, and that, however mad and foolish my conduct of to-day may lead you to believe me, you need have no fear for her.”

He took up my letters, and left the room, by the door that opened into the entrance hall; leaving me overwhelmed with distress and perplexity. I sat there, I do not know how long, hardly able to bring my thoughts into any sort of arrangement, and chiefly conscious of the wish to get away from Bevis as soon as possible. With what pleasure I had come thither, as a complete breaking-away from and contrast to the scenes through which I had recently passed; how strange a connection had established itself between them! It would be impossible for me to remain; I could not hold so anomalous a position; besides, when the strange mood that had prompted Captain Dunstan’s unsought and unwelcome confidence should have passed away, I, of all persons in the world, would be the least pleasing in his sight; it was impossible that he should ever feel at ease with me again. I must devise some excuse for going away, which should excite no suspicion in Janet’s mind; though, indeed, how should any come there? Time passed, the evening drew on; I heard the sound of carriage wheels, and concluded that Captain Dunstan had gone. Still Janet had not come to look for me in the library, and I remained there, glad of every minute’s delay before I must see her sweet unconscious face again; remained after the room had been lighted, and until it was time to dress for dinner, and still Janet had not come to look for me. At length I went upstairs, and, passing by the end of the Admiral’s Corridor on my way to my own room, I observed Janet’s maid stooping down and apparently listening at the door of her mistress’s room. She perceived me, and said:

“The door is locked, and Mrs. Dunstan does not answer. I have knocked several times. I am afraid she is ill.”

"Mrs. Dunstan has not come in," I answered; "I left her at the Vicarage."

Janet had certainly come in, however; the door was locked on the inside, and also that of the dressing-room which communicated with Janet's own sitting-room, and in the latter we found the hat, gloves, and shawl she had worn that afternoon. We rattled the handle of the door, and called to her several times without effect; but, just as I was becoming seriously alarmed, the key turned and Janet opened the door, supporting herself by it, and showing us a face so ghastly that her maid uttered an exclamation of fear. She was wrapped in a white dressing-gown, and her hair was loose; her eyes were dim and contracted, her face was ashy pale, except for a red spot that burned on each cheek-bone; her lips were livid, and she was shivering. I shall never forget the white figure in the doorway, against the dimness behind her, facing the lights of the bright pretty sitting-room.

"Janet, what is the matter? Are you ill?"

"I am afraid I am. I have been lying down." She spoke each word faintly, with a pause between it and the next, and in a voice quite unlike her own. And those were the last coherent words she addressed to anyone for many days to come. Dr. Andrews was in the house when Captain Dunstan came home late that night, and she was then quiet, but it was the first of many nights of watching and anxiety; during which her mind and her speech were not occupied with actual things, or with us who were about her at all. Dr. Andrews was of opinion that the illness had not come so suddenly as it seemed to come; and Mrs. Cathcart told us that she had not thought Janet looking well when she was at the Vicarage in the afternoon. In answer to the doctor's minute enquiries no one could tell him anything of the interval between Janet's leaving Mrs. Cathcart—which I found she had done very much earlier than I supposed—and the moment at which I and her maid ascertained the fact of her illness; no one had seen her come into the house; and Captain Dunstan, concluding that she was with me in the library, and being rather late for his dinner engagement, had not looked for her before he went out.

On the dreary days which followed I need not dwell. They had this effect on me personally, that they had removed every shade of embarrassment from between my-

self and Captain Dunstan. There were times when I hardly recalled what had passed; so intently was my mind set upon the hand to hand, foot to foot, inch by inch fight in which she and we were engaged with the insidious and terrible foe that had stricken her. I pass on to the time when she began to recover. Then, her mind being clear, though weak and passive as it seemed to me, I especially observed two things: the first, that she was sensibly distressed by Captain Dunstan's presence; the second, that she was better, more restful, and more refreshed when Amabel Ainslie was with her. She would close her eyes when her husband entered the room, and answer his enquiries gently, but she never asked him a question, and she never enquired for him in his absence. To me she was always gentle, and painfully grateful; but she would lie, or sit, for hours, holding Amabel's hand with her own eggshell-like fingers, speaking little, but listening to her friend's pleasant talk. Amabel read aloud to her occasionally, but I do not think Janet listened; she would keep her eyes closed all the time. She was at her best when Amabel could be with her. The first wish of any kind that she expressed was that Captain Dunstan should go to London as he had proposed to do; and this she conveyed through Amabel. He went up to town, it being then late in June, and Janet regaining strength rapidly. I could not but observe that she was exceedingly nervous when he was going away, and that, either by accident, or by her own contrivance, they were not alone for a moment. No allusion had been made by Captain Dunstan or myself to the events of the day on which Janet's illness commenced; and I now bade him farewell for an indefinite time, as I was to return to Hunsford the following week.

From the hour of her husband's departure I observed a singular alteration in Janet. Her nervousness subsided, her absent manner changed, she improved in strength daily, but a settled sadness took possession of her.

On the day before that on which I was to leave Bevis, two letters arrived; one was for me, the other was for Janet. The first announced, in Laura's own hand, the birth of Laura's son. A joyful and a sorrowful mother was my cousin; and the few lines, in which I read both joy and sorrow, touched me very nearly. The second announced, in a hand which Janet

did not know, the death of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Monroe, at Nice. I was afraid of the effect that the intelligence might have upon Janet, but she took it very quietly. Amabel was with her for part of that day, and I heard Janet say to her:

"There is not, now, anyone of kin to me in the whole world."

She talked to me more than usual on the day before I was to leave her, of my future, and of John; never of herself, and she made no mention of her husband. The oppressive consciousness in my own mind, that had revived when the pressure of anxiety about her life and health was removed, prevented me from naming him. I saw Janet last, standing at the top of the great avenue, in her deep mourning dress. She waved her hand to me, while I leaned from the carriage window for a parting look.

The remainder of what I have to set down here is but hearsay, therefore shall be brief.

Two days after I left Bevis, Janet drove into the town of Bury, and drew out of the bank the whole of the money standing in her name there. On the third, she told her maid that she was going to London, and would not require her to go with her; but would send her instructions afterwards. She then left Bevis, taking only a travelling-bag, and was driven to the post-office, where she put a letter into the box with her own hand; and thence to the railway-station, where she arrived only just in time to take her place in the train.

No instructions reached Janet's maid; no communication of any kind was made by Mrs. Dunstan to her household; and when, after several days had elapsed, Mrs. Manners wrote to Captain Dunstan, expressing the surprise and uneasiness which the silence of Mrs. Dunstan was occasioning at Bevis, her respectful remonstrance received a startling reply.

As soon as it was possible for him to reach Bevis after the receipt of the house-keeper's letter, Captain Dunstan arrived there, and it very shortly became known to the household that Mrs. Dunstan had not joined her husband in London. Nothing more became known to them,

except, indeed, that their mistress had incurred no blame of the kind that involves disgrace by what she had done. "Something between them that nobody knows anything about," was the general supposition; "but he respects her as much as ever, and if she never comes back it will be her fault, and not his."

In the centre compartment of the old bureau in Janet's dressing-room, where she habitually kept her keys, and which was found to be unlocked, there was a small parcel addressed to Captain Dunstan. It contained a bracelet of gold set with cats'-eyes, and a letter. Of the contents of that letter only a few lines were ever made known to anyone except Captain Dunstan himself, and with them only I am concerned here. The writer said that she was aware, if search were made for her, there was little hope that she could elude it, being so unequally matched against the resources of such search; but she earnestly entreated that none should be made; entreated this as the one only compensation that could be made to her. When freedom should have been restored to Captain Dunstan by her death he should be apprised of it; she would take order for that. In the interval and for the rest she implored peace.

Captain Dunstan, whose distress and remorse were extreme, left no means untried to discover Janet, despite her prayer; but she had had too much the start of enquiry, and all was unavailing. From no quarter could he obtain intelligence of her; the only friends she had, the old ladies at Bury House, were horror-stricken, and absolutely ignorant; her only relative had died among strangers in a strange land.

These are the facts that I have had to record; of the feelings they have given rise to it would be equally vain and impossible for me to say anything.

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